

VZCZCXR09901
PP RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDJ #0008 0051555
ZNY CCCCC ZZH

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FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9874
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFSS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000008

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/E, AF/RSA, AND PM/PPA
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA-WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2019

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: DJIBOUTI FM STRESSES URGENT NEED TO SUPPORT SOMALI SECURITY FORCE

Classified By: DCM ERIC WONG. REASON: 1.4 (A) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In a Jan. 4 meeting with Ambassador, Foreign Minister Youssouf hailed recent USG statements on Somalia and on the Dec. 29 resignation of TFG President Yusuf, noting that Yusuf had been an obstacle to the Djibouti Process. Citing the reluctance of potential troop contributing countries to contribute further contingents to AMISOM, Youssouf said it was imperative to empower Somalis themselves and to create an indigenous Somali security force. Youssouf said other countries were now stepping forward to support the Somali forces, including a \$1.5 million pledge from Yemen for uniforms and light weapons, rations from Sudan, and Saudi willingness to pay troop salaries. Youssouf welcomed the USG pledge of \$5 million and urged its rapid disbursement. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In a Jan. 4 meeting with Ambassador, Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf hailed the Dec. 29 resignation of Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) President Abdillahi Yusuf, noting that Yusuf had been an obstacle to the Djibouti Process. Yusuf's departure had now "accelerated" the timeline for forming a more inclusive 550-person parliament comprised of additional ARS representatives, as the Somali constitution required that parliament elect a new president within 30 days. According to FM Youssouf, there were nearly 20 candidates seeking to replace Yusuf, including Hassan Abshir Farah (former Puntland interior minister who then served as former TNG prime minister from 2001-2004).

POTENTIAL DONORS INCLUDE SUDAN, YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA

¶3. (C) On the political front, the next round of TFG-ARS talks (to be held under UN auspices) would occur after the week of January 10, FM Youssouf said. Meanwhile, according to Youssouf, Ethiopia was consolidating its troops in Somalia in 5 sites, as part of its announced withdrawal. As potential troop contributing countries to AMISOM (e.g., Nigeria) had been slow to provide contingents, it was imperative to empower Somalis themselves and to create an indigenous Somali security force, Youssouf said. Promoting such stability on land was also key to combating Somali piracy at sea, he added.

¶4. (C) Repeating Djibouti's long-standing position, Youssouf stressed the need for international support for international security forces. He said that other regional actors had stepped forward to help. At a meeting of the "Sanaa

Cooperation Group" in Khartoum on Dec. 31, the Sudanese representative had reportedly pledged to provide rations. In a follow-on meeting, the Yemenis had agreed to provide \$1.5 million in uniforms and light weapons. Finally, the Saudis had now committed to provide modest salaries (Youssouf estimated \$100 per month) to the troops.

¶ 15. (C) Citing recent discussions with Italian ambassador, who also presided over the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), Youssouf said IPF members had also discussed the need for rapid assistance to support the formation of a Somali security force, and to provide it with at least the minimum means necessary to operate. According to Youssouf, other potential donor countries included Sudan (food aid), Yemen (uniforms and light weapons), and Saudi Arabia.

FM Youssouf welcomed the Dec. 29 USG pledge to provide \$5 million for Somali security, and urged its prompt disbursement.

¶ 16. (C) COMMENT. Youssouf's review of ostensibly firm commitments from regional actors to support Somali security forces is the most detailed we have seen. If accurate, it suggests growing recognition of the urgent need to prevent a security vacuum by strengthening indigenous forces.

SWAN